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FILE ONLY

OFFICIALS: PHONY CIA AGENT GETS SCUBA GEAR DISCOUNT  
HOUSTON

A man accused of posing as a CIA agent so he could buy scuba gear at bargain prices has been charged with impersonating a government official, officials say.

Paul Alan White, 30, of suburban Pasadena, was released on a \$5,000 personal recognizance bond after being arrested Thursday. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of three years in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

Officials claim White found a government identification card on the floor of the building where FBI and Secret Service offices are located, then touched up the card to make it resemble a CIA card.

White allegedly used the card to persuade the owner of a Webster scuba shop last November that he was a CIA agent. The owner then offered him discounts, eventually saving him more than 50 percent on diving equipment, according to court records.

Federal prosecutor Mark Bailey said such discounts to government officials are a common perk.

Investigators said that by late February, White had bought \$1,088 worth of equipment for only \$488.